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D'AMATO: CIA IGNORED INFO ON POPE PLOT

By NILES LATHAM, N.Y. Post Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Sen. Alfonse D'Amato accused the CIA of ignoring shocking information he gave them in October 1981 that the Soviet Union was involved in the plot to kill Pope John Paul II.

D'Amato, in an interview with The Post last night, said that he was told by senior Vatican officials and top Italian diplomats during a visit last year that there was evidence that the KGB was behind the Turkish terrorist who shot the Pope.

Immediately upon his return to the U.S., D'Amato said, he had an urgent meeting with CIA officials in which he relayed the information.

The interview was held on Oct. 19 in a top-secret conference room in the Capitol. The CIA's former legislative liaison director, Alan Ptak, and three unidentified agents attended.

But Ptak discounted the information and bluntly told D'Amato to keep quiet.

"The disturbing factor is that when I went to the CIA they indicated to me that my information was not correct and they exhibited



POPE JOHN PAUL
Target of KGB.

very little interest in it," he said.

"Then they advised me to be very, very low key," the New York Republican said.

Dale Peterson, a spokesman for the CIA, said last night he would have no comment on D'Amato's charge.

D'Amato said it was the firm belief of the Vatican and Italian po-

lice that the KGB was behind the plot.

The Vatican told the senator that the Polish Pope had threatened to wage a major campaign against the Soviet crackdown on Poland's Solidarity union movement.

It was believed that the KGB acted quickly to silence him, D'Amato said.

"But what astonished everyone I talked to is that the KGB apparently acted too quickly so that they left traces behind — something they don't normally do," he said.

"There were just too many coincidences," he added.

D'Amato identified the Vatican official he spoke with only as a "monsignor and friend," and said that to release his name could jeopardize his life.